

Pilot No. 1: Reference Alternative Documents

Focus: Consolidated Plan Document

Purpose:

To evaluate whether referencing and/or substituting existing local plans for Consolidated Plan components reduces grantees' administrative burdens. Grantees will work with HUD to determine whether their strategy meets regulatory requirements.

Participants:

San Mateo County, CA; Cupertino, CA; Elk Grove, CA; Richmond, CA; State of CA; Miami Beach, FL; Gwinnett County, GA

Pilot Description:

Certain components of a Consolidated Plan can duplicate existing plans, such as local economic development, Continuum of Care, or local comprehensive plans. A streamlined Consolidated Plan could incorporate or link to these existing documents, rather than burden grantees with developing redundant components.

Participants in this pilot include State, county, and city grantees that need to submit Consolidated Plans in 2003 and will work with the CPD State Office Directors. They will:

1. Compile alternative strategies for referencing local plans, these may include existing techniques as well as new ideas
2. Work with HUD staff, the pilot group would determine whether these strategies meet regulatory and statutory requirements
3. Finally, drawing on strategies that meet HUD requirements, pilot group members would prepare a Consolidated Plan incorporating or referring to existing local plans

Summary of Grantee Pilots:

San Mateo County, CA; Cupertino, CA; Elk Grove, CA; Richmond, CA, all these grantees will take this opportunity to streamline the Con Plan. Their goals are to develop Consolidated Plans that are more concise, easier to read, and to cross-reference other reports. Most of the information that will be cross-referenced will be from the Housing Element. Many of the grantees will post other documents (i.e. Citizen Participation Plan, past Consolidated Plans, Housing Element, Continuum of Care Plan, etc.) on their website for public

access. When possible, grantees will use charts, tables, and summaries of information (bullet points). Grantees may include appendices, which would also make the Consolidated Plan a more concise document.

State of California is working in conjunction with San Francisco F/O,* and has an approved pilot with the following objectives:

- ▶ Eliminate requirement for CDBG PER
- ▶ Standardized definitions and required data components
- ▶ Eliminate need for duplicative recordkeeping necessary for CAPER preparation for all programs
- ▶ Identify key performance data indicators common across all four programs
- ▶ Develop standardized more user-friendly format, tabular-driven with brief data, performance summaries; extending CAPER submission deadlines

Miami Beach, FL planned to reference other documents to streamline the data and narrative information and make it easier to understand by citizens, other city staff, and local HUD staff.

Gwinnett County, GA will combine two similar plans (State's Comprehensive Plan and HUD's Consolidated Plan) into one document that meets requirements of both. This goes beyond referencing existing plans by combining the requirements of two plans into one document.

Pilot No. 1 Status as of December 31, 2003

City of Cupertino, CA Consolidated Plan incorporated references to other documents such as the Housing Element, the Countywide Continuum of Care Plan, and Analysis of Impediments among others. Although staff could not compare the planning process to previous years, the City believes that the level of detail was streamlined but included all required data. Staff time required to prepare the document was reduced. A copy of their plan can be viewed at: <http://www.egplanning.org/misc/cdbg>.

Elk Grove, CA Consolidated Plan was streamlined by providing data highlights in a bulleted format along with references to existing documents for detail when necessary. It was advantageous to post the Consolidated Plan and referenced documents on the City's CDBG website. Staff was able to create the Consolidated Plan in a short amount of time because of the flexibility in providing information through references and tables.

San Mateo County, CA Consolidated Plan incorporated tables with bullet-pointed items as well as references to other relevant documents. The final product had fewer pages than the previous Consolidated Plan.

Richmond, CA stated that while preparation of the Consolidated Plan was underway, the City could not fully streamline the document due to time constraints.

Miami Beach, FL Consolidated Plan referenced other documents (i.e.) North Beach Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, City's Growth Management Plan, and Local Housing Assistance Plan. This strategy made it easier to understand by citizens, other city staff and local HUD staff. The Plan included a concise Table of Content and Appendices that ultimately enhanced comprehension.

Gwinnett County, GA is continuing to work with State and local officials to review how to integrate new State Comprehensive Plan requirements and the requirements of the Consolidated Plan.

CPD reviewers found the documents shorter, more readable, and user-friendly. Overall, the use of formatting, tables, bullet points, and cross-references significantly reduced the number of pages, while maintaining all of the required data. The County of San Mateo and the Cities of Cupertino and Elk Grove successfully utilized references to existing documents and bullet point lists to clearly outline Consolidated Plan goals. The City of Richmond, while not significantly streamlining the Consolidated Plan, was able to identify several areas of improvement in the Planning process. CPD will use participant feedback in combination with the Pilot experience to further pursue effective and efficient methods of preparing a concise Consolidated Plan that clearly outlines the community development needs and strategies of our grantees.